

Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority



In the 1800s over 20 horse drawn coaches provided mass transit to the residents of Boston. Each offered different fare structures and overlapping lines of service. This led to public outcry and in 1887, legislation was passed to consolidate the lines and create one of the largest street railway operations in the United States.

When this mode of transportation became outdated and many of the larger cities were employing cable cars, Boston determined to install cable cars, but to electrify the system. The first electric streetcar line started on January 1, 1889. The expansion of this technology was rapid and by 1911, Massachusetts had more street railway trackage per square mile than any other state in the union.

Transportation systems continued to improve, but by 1918 increased costs caused the legislature to pass the Public Control Act, designed to provide public operation of mass transportation for fares at rates sufficient to meet all cost of furnishing that service which at the time was determined to be a nickel. In 1947 the Massachusetts Transit Authority (MTA) was created. The MTA began serving 14 cities and towns. In 1964, the MTA was replaced with the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA), a greatly expanded entity created to provide service to 78 municipalities. In 1974 the MBTA added commuter rail service. Today the MBTA administers an extensive network of mass transit. In 1993 the MBTA was the nation's 6th largest transportation system serving a population of 2,608,638 in 78 cities and towns in a service area of 1,038 miles.

Photography courtesy of the MBTA.

Combining and Individual Fund Statements and Account Group Schedules

Transportation



The TH!NK

Francis Edgar Stanley and Freelan Oscar Stanley were twin brothers who were inventors. Early in their careers, they invented a photographic plate, which they sold to Eastman Kodak. The money from that sale provided funds to develop the first steam driven motor car. In 1899 they launched the Stanley Motor Car business in Watertown, MA and were producing 10 cars a day and orders that were backed up for months.



In 1906 their Stanley Steamer set a world's speed record of nearly 130 miles per hour. The car weighed only 500 pounds and had a 35 pound, two cylinder engine. During the speed trial, the car became airborne and rose several feet off the ground. It hit the ground and broke into two sections. The boiler flew down the track blowing steam like a meteor, according to reporters. Thereafter, that model of the Stanley Steamer was called the Flying Teapot.

Today car manufacturers are working to produce cars that are more fuel efficient and better for the environment. Electric cars are one answer. Small and light, they can achieve remarkable distances on a single charge. Another solution are hybrid cars that use gasoline engines, but can recapture some of the extra energy and store it in batteries for later use in order to improve the vehicles' fuel efficiency.

Photography of the Stanley Twins in the first Stanley Steamer, courtesy of Stanley Steamer Museum Collection.
Ford motors TH!NKs electric car courtesy of www.cars.com.

Boston Public Library Children's Room



The Children's Room at the main branch of Boston Public Library (BPL) is the oldest one in the country. Originally the patent room, it was renamed Children's Room in 1898 when the patent collection was moved out. At this time it became a general reference reading room for children and teachers. The bookshelves were designed to be low enough for a child to access without the help of a librarian. It also contained artwork and framed historical documents. Remodeling of the current Children's Room was completed in 1994. In 1996, Margaret Rey, who along with her husband Hans authored the famous "Curious George" series of children's books, celebrated her 90th birthday by gifting the BPL with a million dollars for the enhancement of the children's areas throughout BPL's twenty-five branch libraries. In return for her generosity, the original Children's Room in the Central Library was re-named for the Reys. Today the Children's room has over 60,000 volumes in its library, and approximately half of those in circulation at any one time.

Photography courtesy of the Boston Public Library archives and Jim Guan.